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Governor Baker Announces Expansion of CVS Health Medication Disposal Program in Massachusetts

MEDFORD – Governor Charlie Baker, Secretary Marylou Sudders and Attorney General Maura Healey today joined local officials to announce the expansion of CVS Health’s safe and convenient medication disposal program at the first drug take-back unit at the Medford CVS Pharmacy. CVS Health will launch 42 new medication disposal units in CVS Pharmacy locations throughout the Commonwealth for easy disposal of unwanted, unused or expired medications in effort to help fight the opioid epidemic.

“Addiction can often start at home in our own medicine cabinets, and today we are pleased to partner with CVS Health and build on efforts to address this public health crisis across the Commonwealth,” **said Governor Charlie Baker.** “The units give our residents more safe and reliable ways to discard unwanted medications and using them will prevent unnecessary exposure to addictive opioids for anyone in your home.”

The new units will supplement the nearly 40 units CVS Health has donated to police departments across the state and will be available for drug disposal during regular pharmacy hours. Nationwide, CVS Health will launch more than 750 medication disposal units in its pharmacies and has donated more than 800 units to police departments, collecting more than 220,000 pounds of unwanted medication.

“With a presence in nearly 10,000 communities across the country, we see firsthand

the impact of the alarming and rapidly growing epidemic of opioid addiction and misuse,” said **Thomas M. Moriarty, Executive Vice President, Chief Policy and External Affairs Officer, and General Counsel, CVS Health**. “Expanding our safe medication disposal efforts is an extension of the initiatives in place across our company to fight the opioid abuse epidemic, and we are proud to bring this new disposal program to the Commonwealth. Massachusetts has led the nation in legislation to address this epidemic, including being the first to institute a seven day limit on opioid prescriptions. As we implement this policy here in 2018, we will also build on it by instituting a seven day limit on opioid prescriptions for certain acute conditions for patients we serve nationwide.”

“We need all hands on deck to combat the opioid epidemic,” said **Attorney General Maura Healey**. “That’s why my office has worked closely with partners across business, law enforcement, and every level of government to disrupt drug trafficking, change prescribing practices, increase access to treatment, and fund prevention and education in our schools. I applaud CVS Health for making it easier for our residents to safely dispose of unwanted medications, and I look forward to continuing our work toward ending this crisis once and for all.”

As part of the company’s broad commitment to addressing the opioid crisis, CVS Health and the CVS Health Foundation also announced \$150,000 in grants to programs at Boston Medical Center, Mattapan Community Health Center and Greater Lawrence Family Health Center that support the Commonwealth’s prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery efforts. This work builds on ongoing programs the company operates including the [Pharmacists Teach program](#), which brings CVS pharmacists to local schools to talk to teens and parents about the dangers of abusing prescription drugs. More than 15,000 teens in Massachusetts have already participated in the program.

“We commend CVS Health for its commitment to addressing the opioid crisis,” said **Health and Human Services Secretary Marylou Sudders**. “The company’s initiatives to combat the epidemic align with our statewide public health strategy”.

Between 2011 and 2015, nonfatal overdoses increased by about 200% in Massachusetts. CVS Health is one of several pharmacies statewide that has made naloxone, an overdose reversal drug, available without requiring a prescription from a physician. To date, the Baker-Polito Administration has helped train more than 56,000 people statewide to administer the life-saving drug.

For the first time in years, [opioid-related deaths declined by 10%](#) for the first nine months of 2017 in Massachusetts. Additionally, opioid prescriptions have dropped by 29 percent since the complete overhaul of the state’s prescription monitoring tool,

MassPAT. In November, the Baker-Polito Administration announced the second significant package to fight the opioid and heroin epidemic, including legislation titled ["An act relative to Combatting addiction, Accessing treatment, Reducing prescriptions and Enhancing prevention"](#) (CARE Act). The CARE Act builds upon the STEP Act enacted in March 2016, which expanded treatment, created new education programs and instituted the nation's first seven day limit on opioid prescriptions for adults.

For a list of all Massachusetts Rx/Prescription Medication Drop Box Locations, click [here](#). For more information on the state's response to the opioid epidemic, visit www.mass.gov/opioidresponse.

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